

“Recovered Old Roses”

Let’s lose the term “*Rose Rustling*.” The important words are:

**Collection,
Propagation,
Study,
Distribution.**

Without Propagation, Study, and Distribution, Collection is pointless. Worse, “Rose Rustling” inspires careless collection of often over-stressed plants. I like the term our Australian friends coined: “*Recovered Old Roses*.” Even in our warming, drying South-west, we continue to recover, collect, propagate, study, and distribute forgotten Old Roses. **Here are three of them.**

‘*Le Pactole*’

Fred Boutin met his first antique rose as a teenager. Now an internationally recognized rosarian, botanist, and authority on *found roses*, Boutin is responsible for the survival of many formerly “*Lost*” roses, some identified – some remaining mysteries. (Perhaps you’ve heard of “*The Portland From Glendora*”?) He played a crucial role in the establishment of a Historic Rose Garden in the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery (Sacramento, CA). Many roses in that wonderful garden were his donations.

‘*Le Pactole*’ – a rose thought extinct prior to its re-discovery and subsequent identification was not, as you might imagine, found in a romantic old cemetery. Rather, Boutin’s sharp eye caught the remnant of an apparent Miniature Rose, clinging to life in a dirt parking lot. Boutin’s propagation, study, and identification gave us back a rose thought lost – named for the river in Asia Minor where Midas washed away the curse of the Golden Touch.

‘*Le Pactole*’ today flourishes in Sacramento’s Historic Rose Garden – one of his original donations to that remarkable collection. It is a rosebush of imperial proportions, perhaps 8-feet of disease-free, bloom-covered growth. Ribbon-like, gold-toned-white petals form intricate blooms of medium size, held in generous clusters on a plant well-clothed in disease-resistant foliage. Most importantly for Southwestern rosarians, ‘*Le Pactole*’ is a tough, drought-resistant garden rose.

Thanks to Boutin, and to the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, there are three listed commercial sources for ‘*Le Pactole*’. (It is also available periodically, at the Cemetery’s April Open Garden.



‘*Le Pactole*’
(Meilleuz, France, bef. 1837;
Lamarque x Smith’s Yellow Tea-scented China)

“*George Washington Richardson*” (aka “*Legacy Of The Richardson Family*”)



“*George Washington Richardson*”
(aka “*Legacy Of The Richardson Family*”)

“*George Washington Richardson*” was discovered first by Ed Wilkinson, then-curator-of-roses at the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden who named it for the Richardson family plot. It was rediscovered, collected, and propagated by Jeri and Clay Jennings, in the same small Northern California cemetery.

We’re still learning about “*George Washington Richardson*”. It may be a Climber – perhaps a climbing Tea Rose. It covers itself repeatedly with fragrant white blooms – opening buds sometimes touched red. The fully open bloom may show subtle yellow shading, and fading blooms may blush pink. But overall, this is a white rose, the blooms contrasting with deep green leaves.

For us, and in its cemetery, “*George Washington Richardson*” is disease-free. It’s not yet widely grown, though, so “*your mileage may vary*.” If one day it comes to commerce, this is a rose you’ll want to grow!

What is it? Where did it come from?

The mother plant grows between the graves of George Washington

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'Fiametta Nabonnand'
(With Thanks to Etienne Bouret")

Richardson (1864-1896) and his son, Albert (1894-1945).

We're intrigued by the fact that some of George and Martha Washington's slaves, upon manumission, took the name "*Richardson*". But this is not an easy surname to trace. We are certain only that the family migrated to Northern California, suffered an Indian attack before moving to the Capay Valley.

We're intrigued by an illustration of '*Fiametta Nabonnand*' (Tea; G. Nabonnand; France, 1894).

Perhaps it's only coincidence that the description of that lost rose: "*White, carmine-pink shading, golden-yellow undertones, pink edges. Strong fragrance. Large, semi-double to double bloom form*" fits "*George Washington Richardson*" like a glove. The parentage of '*Fiametta Nabonnand*' is known: '*Papa Gontier*' x '*Niphetos*' so perhaps DNA testing could help solve this mystery.

Ask me about this rose in five or ten years. (There's presently no commercial source. We're working on that.)

"Jesse Hildreth"

It took "*a village*" to preserve "*Jesse Hildreth*." Literally. An actual village.

When the "*Jesse Hildreth*" rose first caught the attention of the Old Rose community, it was a tree, covered with huge creamy blooms, silhouetted at the highest point of a hillside cemetery in San Juan Bautista, CA. The Study Name honors Jesse Hildreth, son of a prominent cattle rancher, dead at age 21 in January, 1862, who lies next to the rose.

Originally, we thought this might be '*Devoniensis*'.

Comparison to a known '*Devoniensis*' corrected that error, but this *is* a Tea Rose, and a disease-resistant one.

White blooms, shaded yellow, are reminiscent of the Tea/Noisette, '*Lamarque*'. But "*Jesse's*" blooms have up to 100 petals. '*Lamarque*' offers 26-40. Are they related? That seems possible. Bloom color and foliage also invite comparison to '*Le Pactole*'.

'*Devoniensis*,' '*Le Pactole*' and '*Lamarque*' are all progeny of the lost '*Smith's Yellow Tea-Scented China*'? Is "*Jesse Hildreth*" another in that family? Perhaps DNA testing will tell us.

Jesse's rose was nearly lost. Already damaged by drought and age, and weed-whacked to prevent the growth of new canes, the mother plant lost half of its roots to a new burial. It looked like the rose's



"Jesse Hildreth"

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"Jesse Hildreth" in 2006



journey was finished. Today, members of a new local Heritage Roses Group have taken on the care and preservation of this and other historic roses in their Cemetery, and their town. These days, you may find them taking water to the old roses, and tending to them. Things look brighter now, for Jesse.

Collection and propagation have put **“Jesse Hildreth”** into the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden and the Sacramento Historic Cemetery. In mid-2015, we learned that Rose Petals Nursery (Florida) will soon release plants of Jesse’s rose. DISTRIBUTION! It’s the best hedge against extinction.

— Jeri Jennings, July, 20-15

‘Lamarque’ (Marechal, France, 1830 Blush Noisette x Parks Yellow Tea-Scented China)

‘Le Pactole’ (Meille, France, bef. 1837; Lamarque x Smith’s Yellow Tea-scented China)

‘Devoniensis’ (Tea, Foster, UK, 1838; Parks’ Yellow Tea-Scented China x Smith’s Yellow China).

“Jesse Hildreth” (Tea; Recovered Old Rose, San Juan Bautista, CA, Jennings)